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STATE FOR R/MR, I/PP, WHA/BSC, WHA/PDA, INR/IAA, PM

STATE FOR INL, INR/R/MR, NEA/IR

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TAGS: [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [OPRC](#) [PTER](#) [CI](#) [IR](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION - SADDAM'S DEATH SENTENCE

¶1. On December 29, conservative, influential newspaper-of-record "El Mercurio" (circ. 129,000) carried an editorial entitled, "Saddam's Execution." Quotes:

"Some believe that Saddam's execution will contribute to pacifying Iraq because it will eliminate the cause for division. But others believe his death will only exacerbate violence. The trial was questionable in the way it was conducted and therefore executing the sentence will only deepen the feeling of insult of the defeated Sunnite factions....

European countries...believe it is possible to reach an agreement with Saddam's supporters and commute the sentence . . . What is clear at this point is that there are no easy solutions to the conflict in Iraq and that U.S. policy is falling apart... Saddam Hussein's execution will not resolve many problems, but it would be inexplicable and weaken the government of Baghdad not to carry out the Iraqi tribunal's sentence just because it makes the occupation forces uncomfortable."

KELLY